



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

November 18, 2005

News Release

TACOMA PASTOR INDICTED FOR VISA FRAUD

Leader of Hope Korean Church charged with seeking visas for imposter religious workers

SEATTLE – U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents arrested the pastor of the Hope Korean Church in Tacoma today on charges that he filed fraudulent visa applications for foreign nationals he claimed were coming to the United States to serve as religious workers at his church.

Dong Wan Park, 52, was taken into custody this morning by ICE agents based on a federal indictment charging him with three-counts of visa fraud. He is scheduled to make his initial appearance in U.S. District Court in Tacoma at 2:30 p.m. this afternoon.

The indictment against Park alleges that the pastor made false statements in non-immigrant worker petitions he filed on behalf of two foreign nationals, representing that the individuals would be employed as pastors at his church. According to the indictment, the foreign nationals in question had no religious training and never actually worked for the Hope Korean Church.

The fraudulent visa applications Park submitted included seminary transcripts and certificates of ordination, which turned out to be counterfeit. ICE agents allege the Tacoma pastor accepted payments of \$27,000 and \$20,000 to sponsor the two individuals.

“Visa fraud of this type undermines the integrity of our legal immigration process and is of great concern to us,” said Leigh Winchell, special agent-in-charge of ICE investigations in Seattle. “ICE is aggressively targeting those who commit this kind of fraud and then seek to profit from it.”

The charges against Park arose from an earlier investigation into a fraud scheme allegedly headed by a man named Jung Kim, who is accused of luring Korean investors to the United States under the guise of receiving highly profitable janitorial franchises along with lawful immigration status.

The charges against Park carry a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison. An indictment contains allegations that have not yet been proven beyond a reasonable doubt.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.